TO: Ty Cashman
Mayumi Oda
Wade Rose
Peter Warshall
Mike Stone

From: David Katz, 11 8 96

Dear Pointers:

Here's a version of a mission statement. I tried to integrate all the pieces and make a statement that would serve for both internal and external use and that was downright practical & describes who we are. I used stuff from historical statements & our meetings. I tried to be as specific as possible.

# POINT FOUNDATION

## MISSION STATEMENT

Point Foundation is a not-for-profit educational organization which serves as the focus point for an ever-changing, informal community of thinkers and doers.

Through a wide range of media and activities, Point provides a global forum for the demystification and evaluation of world-changing technologies. We are driven by the spirit of a pragmatic yet adventurous intellect. Celebration, community and sharing of ideas are at the core of our values.

Point's purpose is to point the way to tools and ideas that help people think and do for themselves, and to envision positive ways to live and work more sanely and sustainably.

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Revised Mission Statement

How's this for a mission statement?

> We monitor and evaluate global changes in climate, forest cover, population, poverty, food production, water resources, biological diversity, and other trends, and identify and analyze the most effective strategies for achieving a sustainable society, including those that come from the advances of science and technology, the rethinking of traditional economics, and the neglected wisdom of now-vanishing indigenous peoples.
>
> Our goal is to provide policymakers, educators, researchers, reporters, and concerned individuals worldwide with the information they need to make decisions that will lead to a sustainable economy.

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Not bad. We can't use it, though, because *World Watch* already took it. I thought that seeing theirs might be helpful as we ask what we have that differentiates us from the rest of the sustainability cabal.

Re name. I'm going to follow something JB says he learned from Mr. Fuller: as soon as you name it, you've already constrained yourself; build it first and then name it. So here's one more crack at a mission statement for the yet-unnamed:

> We nurture and offer practical support to the worldwide, intergenerational lineage of people seeking a more sustainable, sane and satisfying civilization in concert with the natural world. We gather, evaluate and disseminate news about tools, people and practices that serve as exemplars and resources for skillful action. We track the mutual interplay of self-reliance and community nurture.
>
> We celebrate experimentation, adventurous intellect, positive and long-term views, and creative pragmatism. We honor health, humor, and hope, and strive to conduct our business as a self-conscious experiment in community-building and sustainability.

To: Everybody
From: Ty

**What Hath Point Wrought?**

Here are some notes of my reflections on the result of the November 2/3 Board Retreat.

• One way of briefly saying Point's mission is: "to be of practical use to those who are building a civilization of sustainability."

• The values we support in doing this work are the ones we came up with, listed in Mike's 11/4 memo.

• During the retreat we seem to have concluded that the primary strength that Point has as an organization is (a) the loyalty of our subscribers, and (b) their commitment to building a civilization of sustainability along the lines of the values we espouse.

• The result of the Nov. 2/3 retreat seems to me, on reflection, to be a redefinition of Point Foundation/Whole Earth.

From the beginning till now the primary focus was the publication of catalogs and a magazine, by a small group in Sausalito, expressing the above-mentioned values.

The retreat reconsidered the wider mission and the various means by which it can be attained.

The decision was to widen the spectrum of offerings, especially to include face-to-face events as of equal primacy, and to include the readers more actively in carrying out the mission. In addition, we decided to greatly reduce the size and cost of the periodical.

In retrospect it appears that the Board Retreat rethought the definition of Point/Whole Earth and constituted it with a new identity. We have changed from a magazine with subscribers to an organization of members.

• There seemed to be consensus that this new thing we were creating would not be called an "institute" or even a "center," but rather a "working group." The Whole Earth Working Group (for Sustainability).

• Consonant with a new identity as a very inclusive organization of members rather than a somewhat exclusive organization of reviewers, editors and writers, here are some first ideas for a new structure.

1. The Board of Trustees could be expanded to eleven members. This would allow for committees responsible for: Periodical, Conferences, Membership, Book publishing, Fund raising, etc. Each committee could have two Board members and other Whole Earth members working with them.

2. Most likely the By-Laws should be rewritten so that the power is more distributed throughout the Board, officers, etc. rather than concentrated (taylored for an individual like Stewart Brand) in the role of President.

3. Thinking of Point as Whole Earth Working Group, one could imagine a cluster of creative, talented and seasoned individuals each with particular responsibilities, held together and assisted by a "Coordinator" whose job is to keep communications flowing richly among all players. This is the model Bateson, Ashby, Wiener, Beer and others call a "self-organizing system."

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I have to go now. More later.

Please, anyone else with reflections and further thoughts. Let's see them.